Import of steel

515 SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to import 1.5 million tonnes of steel this year to meet the shortage of steel; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons for not issuing more licenses for mini-steel plants to augment domestic production?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) and (b) The proposed Import Plan for 1988-89 envisages import of 1.5 million tonnes of finished steels to bridge the gap between the demand and availability from indigenous sources. The bulk of the imports is for flat products. Under the new guidelines for industries, mini steel plants who after modernisation will have excess capacity of hot metal will be allowed to produce flat products. The relative techno economic benefits of production of flat products by mini steel plants and alternative routes of production have not yet been established.

516. *[Transferred, to the* 10th *May,* 1988]

Crop insurance policy to cover individual farmers

517. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of AGRI CULTURE, be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have re ceived any representations from the farmers to amend the crop insurance policy so as to cover individual farmers; and

(b) if so, what is Government's de cision thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAY): (a); and (b) The Government of India have received some representations for implementing the Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme on individual farmer basis. This has not been agreed to because the scheme is based on area approach. The scheme can be operated only in those notified areas of the State for which adequate yield data for a given crop for the last three years or five years are available and the State Government are in a position to conduct requisite number of crop cutting experiments for a given crop in each of such areas in each season.

Crisis in the sugar industry

518. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sugar industry is facing a serious crisis with financial viability of the factories eroded; and

(b) if so, the action taken by Government to help the industry?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) and (b) There is no serious crisis being faced by the sugar industry. The financial viability of the sugar factories is being ensured by Government through various steps. These include:—

(i) payment of adequate levy sugar price for 1987-88 determined statutorily on the basis of cost, scher dules and other parameters recommended by an Expert Body, namely the Bureau of industrial Costs and Prices (BICP);

(ii) maintenance of open market prices of sugar at reasonable levels through judicious monthly releases;

(iii) grant of financial assistance to the sugar factories both for modernisation as well as sugarcane development;

(iv) grant of incentives like rebate in excise duty on sugar for early crushing; and